



Veganuary... the ideal time to get fit!

New diet... new lifestyle? The two go hand in hand, says plant-based personal trainer **Cath Short**

A new year is upon us and with that comes a renewed enthusiasm for self-preservation, involving a revived fitness regime, weight-loss goals, sensible bedtimes and a lot less alcohol. Once the last mince pie has been consumed and the decorations have been shoved back in the loft (next to the forgotten rowing machine from 2017) then it's time to make our declaration to the world – our fail-safe new year's resolutions.

SETTING - AND STICKING TO - YOUR GOALS

If ever there's a perfect time for positive change then January is it. And if you're trying Veganuary this month, then all the



THE AUTHOR

Cath Short is a Personal Trainer and Nutrition Coach and runs both corporate and informal Eat To Live plant-based workshops.

more reason to assess your health and fitness goals. But sticking to them can take determination and effort, so make sure your aspirations are realistic and within an achievable time frame. When it comes to weight-loss, a target of 1-2 pounds a week is plenty. Imagine, if you lost 0.5 lbs a week for six months – that's almost a stone! Result. Fast fad diets of carb and calorie restrictions will just backfire eventually. The only way to ensure long-term success is with healthy, sustainable habits that eventually become a way of life. Just as eating a whole-food, plant-based diet is a lifestyle, so is exercising three times a week. It has to become part of *you* and your *life* and not just something that

happens if you've got time. So start by putting your workouts in the diary – the NHS recommends two strength training sessions a week and one moderate-high intensity activity. So you could mix up yoga with running and a HIIT class, or cycling with boxing and Body Pump. Find the right combination for you and it won't be a task but a blessing.

ENERGY BOOST

A healthy, naturally low-fat vegan diet is the perfect complement to a new exercise regime. Cutting out animal fats from your diet naturally eliminates bad cholesterol (your liver produces all the cholesterol it needs). And unless you are eating jars of coconut oil each day you will naturally lower your saturated fats too. Anyone who has watched *The Game Changers* will understand that this will help to thin the blood which, in turn, makes it easier to pump the blood around the body. It also helps to prevent furring of the arteries too. The result of this will be a faster delivery of oxygen to the muscle cells which means you won't tire so quickly. It's a win win win: for us, the planet and the animals!

Fortunately, there are more and more fitness trainers and wellness coaches advocating the health benefits of a plant-based diet. At Vevolution Festival I had the pleasure of meeting personal trainer Adam Stansbury (theplantpoweredpt.com) who has successfully been transforming bodies for a number of years by encouraging clients on to a vegan diet. I too can honestly say that I have more success with clients who fully embrace the power of plants and they have a greater chance of long-term success if they do. You just have to take a leap of faith, swim upstream a little and then it's plain sailing. **SV**



FOUR STEPS TO FITNESS

1 Welcome your high-fibre, plant-based diet with open arms. Keep the fats and processed foods low and the grains whole. The weight will start to come off before you even say the word 'gym'!

2 Next up – try out new classes in your area or find an online fitness coach that has some decent YouTube videos. Buy some basic equipment if you need to, like a kettlebell or glute band.

3 Step three is to get yourself some decent gym gear. If you look good you are going to feel good and it will give you that extra confidence boost. You don't have to spend a fortune.

4 Try to encourage friends to join you on your journey to a healthier lifestyle. You are more likely to succeed if you have a gym buddy.



FITNESS TRENDS

Try something new!

» YOGA HIIT

A hybrid class combining dynamic yoga poses with high intensity interval training. Created by Insta-famous yogi Alexis Novak (alexisnovakyoga.com). Prepare to sweat!

» GROUP X

Group fitness has been around forever, but I think we will see a surge in a variety on offer. Fitness experts are getting creative as the demand grows. There will also be more on offer in the work place as employer realise the importance of a fit and healthy workforce.

» AERIAL CLASSES

This covers everything from yoga trapeze (check out yogabody.com) to trampolining, hoops and silks. The craze is getting out of control! The benefits? Hanging upside down brings increased blood flow to the face and brain whilst elongating and decompressing the spine. What's not to like? Search 'aerial fitness classes' in your area.

